

What is claimed is:

1. A toothbrush for creating a whitening effect on a user's teeth, comprising a handle, a cleaning head attached to said handle, said cleaning head having an outer surface, cleaning elements on said cleaning head extending outwardly from said outer surface, said cleaning elements being located in a cleaning field, and said toothbrush having a source of radiation for emitting light energy toward the user's teeth for activating an oxidizing agent on the user's teeth to create a whitening effect.
2. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein said handle is hollow, said source of radiation including a power supply in said handle, and a switch mounted externally on said handle for selectively actuating said power supply.
3. The toothbrush of claim 2 wherein said light energy is emitted from said cleaning field.
4. The toothbrush of claim 2 wherein said light is emitted from at least one LED.
5. The toothbrush of claim 4 wherein said at least one LED is surface mounted to said toothbrush.
- 25 6. The toothbrush of claim 5 wherein said at least one LED has a wavelength of 720-1550 nm.
7. The toothbrush of claim 5 wherein said at least one LED has a wavelength of 350-410 nm.

8. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein said toothbrush is a manual toothbrush.

9. The toothbrush of claim 8 wherein said source of radiation is selectively actuated by a switch on said handle.

5 10. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein said toothbrush is a powered toothbrush having a movable cleaning element carrying section in said cleaning head.

10 11. The toothbrush of claim 10 wherein said source of radiation is selectively actuated by a switch on said handle.

12. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein said switch also actuates said movable section.

13. The toothbrush of claim 10 wherein said cleaning head also includes a non-movable fixed section having cleaning elements, and said light energy is emitted from said fixed section.

15 14. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein said light energy is emitted from plural locations in said cleaning field.

20 15. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein at least some of said cleaning elements are bristles

16. A method for whitening a user's teeth comprising applying an oxidizing agent to the teeth, applying the carrier to the user's teeth, attaching the brightener to the user's teeth, radiating energy from a source in a toothbrush toward the user's

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teeth, and activating the oxidizing agent from the energy to create a whitening effect.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the energy is emitted from at least one LED in the toothbrush.

5 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the oxidizing agent is in toothpaste applied to the toothbrush.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein the source of radiation is selectively activated by a switch.

20. The method of claim 17 wherein the toothbrush is a manual toothbrush.

10 21. The method of claim 17 wherein the toothbrush is a powered toothbrush.